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ABSTRACT

This is a report on government-funded kindergarten programs that were conducted in 1983-84 in more than 110 Chicago schools, most of them in poverty areas. Three funding sources and various instructional models are included in this assessment. The programs differed in format, including half day and all day programs, and in class size. Funds came from the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) Chapters 1 and 2 and from the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity (OEEO). A comparison group of similar schools with no additional funds for kindergarten also was included in this study. This evaluation discusses the effect of class size, compares half day and all day programs, and addresses the issues of inservice training, the learning environment, parent involvement, time use, teacher perceptions, student achievement, and first grade progress. Analysis of the data for this study has led to an intense look across programs at two specific variables: length of school day and pupil/teacher ratio. The final conclusions emphasize the quality and quantity of teacher time spent with children, the length and use of instructional time as critical in successful kindergarten performance, and preferred pupil/teacher ratios. The report also recommends that because the concept of all day kindergarten is still in the developmental stage, care must be taken to create guidelines for its implementation. Tables summarizing data obtained are included throughout the report. (DST)

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CHICAGO'S GOVERNMENT FUNDED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

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EVALUATION REPORT-FISCAL 1984

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MANFORD BYRD, JR.

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

AUGUST 1985

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

MEETING THE NATIONAL MANDATE:
CHICAGO'S GOVERNMENT FUNDED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS
FISCAL 1984

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION REPORT:
EDUCATION CONSOLIDATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT
CHAPTER 1
CHAPTER 2

OFFICE OF EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MANFORD BYRD, JR.
GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

AUGUST 1985

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The evaluation project was conducted by the Department of Research and Evaluation under the supervision of Fred Schuster, Director of the Bureau of ECIA Program Evaluation, with Mavis Hagemann as the project evaluation specialist. Staff from the Department of Research and Evaluation provided clerical, technical, and supportive assistance.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a special report on government-funded kindergarten programs that were conducted in 1983-1984 in more than 110 schools, most of them in poverty areas. Three funding sources and various instructional models are included in this assessment. The programs differed in format--half-day and all-day--and in class size. Funds came from ECIA Chapter 1, ECIA Chapter 2, and OEE0. A comparison group of similar schools with no additional funds for kindergarten (board-funded) was also included in the study.

Supplementary kindergarten programs are expensive. Current state aid funding for both all-day and half-day programs is based on the average number in attendance cut in half. Thus all-day programs, like reduced-size programs, are very expensive, for they add teachers for whom the school system receives no state aid.

This evaluation discusses the effect of class size, compares half-day and all-day kindergarten programs, and addresses the issues of inservice, parent involvement, time use, teacher perceptions, and student achievement. The principal findings of this report are as follows:

- The strongest influence on kindergarten achievement in the funded programs appeared to be the pupil/teacher ratio. Rooms with a ratio of close to 16:1 achieved at or above national norms on a standardized achievement test even though they provided only half-day instruction.
- When similar in pupil/teacher ratio, the posttest results of the all-day kindergarten students were much higher than the half-day kindergarten comparison group, although both were below grade level generally. All-day kindergarten groups with lower pupil/teacher ratios had the best scores.
- Preschool experience had a positive effect which was sustained throughout the kindergarten year.
- Vocabulary development, language understanding, and listening habits were the areas of greatest weakness in the kindergarten graduates.
- On-site support and guidance from coordinators and inservices geared to the specific needs of kindergarten teachers, all of which were provided for government funded programs, may have been partly responsible for high achievement levels. It was found that this kind of service was essential to good implementation, especially in all-day programs.
- Children usually adjusted to the full-day kindergarten program, despite mental fatigue. Afternoon time was most effectively spent in non-academic endeavors.

- Morning time, so crucial to academic learning in kindergarten, was often interrupted by scheduled activities or lunch.
- One concomitant of all-day kindergarten, as reported by teachers of first grade, was the development of good self-discipline skills.
- Both kindergarten and first grade teachers expressed a conviction that readiness is crucial for success in grade one and suggested that children need to spend an additional year in kindergarten or enter a developmental first grade if they are not ready.
- Despite receiving graduates of all-day kindergarten programs, teachers of first grade apparently failed to pace their instruction toward successful completion of the recommended course of instruction by most students.
- Parents needed education concerning child-centered activities which are related to improved school attitudes and achievement.
- If all-day kindergarten were to be provided for only some students, most of the experienced kindergarten teachers were of the opinion that the most mature children or those with preschool training should be selected.
- In order to produce the most positive impact, a class size of about 15 should be provided for the immature, least-ready-for-school students.

Chicago's Government Funded Kindergarten Programs
Evaluation Report--Fiscal 1984

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Increasingly, government funds from various sources have been targeted to expand kindergarten programs in the Chicago Public Schools, even though Illinois has provided state aid for only a half-day of kindergarten, making the all-day program very expensive. Kindergartens received additional funds for special programs through the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) Chapters 1 and 2, and through the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity (OEEU). In fiscal 1984 specially-funded kindergarten programs for the disadvantaged child existed in more than 110 schools. This study examines these programs, as well as a comparison group. Magnet schools and academies that also received special funds were excluded from the study.

Analysis of the data for this study led to an intense look across programs at two specific variables--length of school day and pupil/teacher ratio. Other factors such as preschool education of the participants and selection criteria for each program were also considered when viewing the data, and care was taken to provide this information when it was considered to be relevant.

In addition to the cross-program analyses, this report is designed to evaluate kindergarten programs funded by ECIA Chapter 1 and the OEEU Full-Day Kindergarten program that began in mid-year. Although included in this report for comparison purposes, the ECIA Chapter 2 All-Day Kindergarten program has been evaluated more comprehensively in "ECIA Chapter 2 All-Day Kindergarten Program, Evaluation Report for Fiscal 1984."

Following is a description of the various components of each funded program. In addition, Table 1, which outlines the basic descriptive data by group, may be useful as a reference for the reader since groups are often combined and compared in this analysis in ways that have little to do with funding.

Kindergarten programs have long existed in different forms in ECIA Chapter 1. Follow Through (FT) programs at six schools provide all-day kindergarten instruction to students who received preschool education in Head Start. These students continue in the FT program through third grade. Class size is usually not reduced from the usual enrollment of 30, but an aide is provided and a released teacher coordinates the program. Programs for preschool children have been implemented for many years in ECIA Child-Parent Centers (CPC). In 20 of the CPCs, kindergarten is available for those who were enrolled in the preschool program. Some of these kindergartens receive additional funds to enable them to implement all-day programs; others have half-day programs with reduced class size.

TABLE 1
KINDERGARTEN GROUPS FOR COMPARISON STUDY

Fund/Type	Number Schools	Student background: # with Pre-school	Program Began	Aide Assigned	Pupil/ Teacher Ratio	Number Students
UEEU-ADK	40	Most	Feb.	yes	28	2716
ECIA Chapter 1:						
Follow Through-ADK	6	Most	Sept.	yes	28	350
CPC-ADK	7	Most	Sept., Feb.	some	22	314
CPC-HDK	9	All	Sept.	some	16	334
AS-ADK	22	Few	Sept.	some	28	1234
AS-HDK	10	Few	Sept.	some	17	636

ECIA Chapter 2:

CPC-ADK	6	Most	Sept.	yes	23	256
Parent Schools-ADK	6	Few	Sept.	yes	23	302
Board-Funded-HDK	37	Few	Sept.	few	28	2879

Explanation of acronyms:

ADK - All-Day Kindergarten
HDK - Half-Day Kindergarten
CPC - Child-Parent Center
AS - Augmented Staffing
UEEU- Office of Equal Educational Opportunity
ECIA- Education Consolidation and Improvement Act

In addition to the above, kindergarten programs are often a part of individual school Chapter 1 proposals. In this instance, called Augmented Staffing (AS), the participants are those most in need of additional help based on an administration of the Chicago Kindergarten Screening Instrument to all incoming kindergarten students. Some of the schools have chosen to serve 30 students in an all-day situation; others serve 15 in the morning and a different 15 in the afternoon, providing the only reduced size half-day programs in the Chicago Public Schools. Some schools purchase aides.

A kindergarten program funded by ECIA Chapter 2 exists in six of the Chapter 1 CPCs and their parent schools. It provides an all-day experience for all kindergarten students, whether in the CPC or in the parent school under which the CPC operates. Classes are smaller than the regular size of 30, but are usually larger than in the half-day CPC. An aide is provided for each room.

In February 1984, 100 classrooms in 40 schools from the Effective Schools Project and from the Racially Identifiable Schools were chosen by UEE0 to implement all-day kindergarten programs. Schools with preschool programs such as Head Start or Child-Parent Centers were selected if they had the extra classrooms necessary for implementation. Students selected for inclusion in the program were to be those with preschool experience and others of similar maturity. Classrooms were generally full-sized (30) and every room was to have an aide.

The average kindergarten teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, in this report termed board-funded, teaches a group of about 30 students in the morning and a similar group in the afternoon. Two groups of schools were carefully selected as comparison groups. To secure a comparison group for the OEE0 program, 17 schools that were part of the project, that had preschool programs, but that lacked room to implement the all-day kindergarten were selected. For Chapter 1, a comparison group was chosen that consisted of 20 non-participating half-day rooms that were in schools with OEE0 or Chapter 1 full-day kindergarten programs. Evaluation data revealed the two comparison groups to be almost identical to each other in all aspects, suggesting that the information gathered provided a fairly accurate assessment of board-funded kindergarten programs in schools serving similar disadvantaged populations. Since there was so much similarity between the two comparison groups, data were combined and the report cites only one board-funded comparison group.

INSERVICE

All government funded kindergarten programs included at least two days of specific kindergarten-level inservice training for the teachers. All inservices were planned by the staff of the Bureau of Early Childhood Programs of the Department of Government Funded Programs of the Chicago Public Schools. Separate inservices were planned for each program or group within a program. Two identical inservices were often conducted on different days so teachers could combine rooms, freeing the other teacher to attend the inservice. Since kindergarten is not mandated to be all day every day, teachers were sometimes directed to arrange to send the children home at noon so they could attend the inservice.

Most inservice was planned and conducted to meet the specific needs and desires of the participating teachers as well as to address the guidelines of the particular funded program in which they were teaching. Coordinators planned the inservice based on what was learned from visits they made to every site in an effort to help implement and improve the program. Inservices for the ECIA programs varied considerably. At one, guidance was given as to methods of assessing pupil needs, including how to use the information in planning the curriculum for that particular group. Another inservice was held at the Museum of Science and Industry and was conducted by a science coordinator from the Department of Curriculum who not only encouraged all to take trips to the new unit being developed in the building and to other museums, but also demonstrated many science projects to use with kindergarten children, accenting the

correlated development of reading and math readiness skills through science. One inservice for teachers of all-day programs centered on ways the expanded day could be used effectively and allowed for an exchange of problems and solutions.

Since OEEU all-day kindergartens didn't begin until mid-year, orientation inservices were necessary. Not only did all of the teachers need some insight into planning for an all-day experience, but half of the teachers were new to their students, several of them new to kindergarten teaching itself. In addition to the orientation which the Early Childhood staff conducted, other inservices were provided. One of these centered on all the new materials that had been purchased for the program, with vendor consultants offering suggestions for maximum educational use of their materials. The Erikson Institute was engaged to provide two days of inservice in mid-semester. This included a grounding in the theory of early childhood education with many practical suggestions and demonstrations as well.

Teacher responses to a questionnaire about the inservices showed most of them to be well-satisfied with the content and quality. As one teacher said, in regard to the Erikson Institute inservice, "It was the best inservice I have attended in my 20 years of teaching." When asked about unaddressed needs in order to plan for future inservice, most responses were from relatively inexperienced teachers. Their suggestions revealed a felt need for more knowledge of child psychology; more specific ideas for teaching the slower, less mature child the alphabet, phonics, and numbers; and more time for just sharing and learning from each other. In place of one inservice, several teachers suggested that planned visitations of other kindergarten rooms would be most helpful.

The board-funded teachers were also asked about inservices. They reported having attended general, all-school or all-district inservices, but none that centered on kindergarten. Interestingly, these teachers, with their large-size, half-day kindergarten classes, appeared to be mostly unaware of the potential growth that could come from a focused kindergarten teacher inservice, for very few of them expressed a need for any specific inservice. One can only surmise that, as they often stated, they have too little time and too many children and don't realize the potential that exists for their own growth as well as that of their students.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A total of 123 observations of kindergarten classes, including a sampling from each program, were conducted by ECIA program evaluators.

The use of a special kindergarten observation form designed to capture similar data for each program enabled comparisons. Evaluators were asked to rate the quality of the instructional interactions between the teacher and the students. The focus was on both teacher and student behaviors, but also included descriptive data of the programs' operation.

Basically, there appeared to be little program difference in the general appearance of the room or in the quality of teaching. Observers rated most teaching as above-average and almost all rooms as attractive and conducive to learning. However, many rooms were judged as too small for the number of students in them. This was primarily true because schools have not been built with enough large-size rooms to accommodate the number of kindergarten rooms necessary for an all-day program. Also, most CPC rooms were planned for classes of about 17 preschool students, and they were very crowded with 24 or more in the all-day program.

Playgrounds were assessed by observers, and only about half of them were judged to be decent. Some of the schools had no play area at all and some did not allow the kindergarten students to use the regular school playground. Approximately a quarter of the playgrounds had playground equipment. Rarely were the kindergarten students observed using the playground, although there were several references to students having physical education class in the gym as a break for the teacher. This practice varied from school to school. Often there appeared to be a lack of available space for the active play advocated by most experts.

Room arrangements showed great diversity. Most rooms had desks or tables to which children were assigned. Many had rugs for grouping the children for stories or instruction. Others had a large circle built into the tile floor to which the children would go for certain activities. Several rooms looked more like first grade rooms than like kindergarten rooms; desks or tables were in rows and there were no interest centers, play areas, or places to gather the children together on the floor. Only a few rooms were set up with separate interest centers and play areas which were regularly used. Live animals, often considered to encompass many necessary learnings while also providing motivation, were observed in only 10 percent of the rooms.

Rooms varied considerably in adequacy of supplies and materials. Most CPC and Chapter 2 rooms and several Chapter 1 rooms had accumulated quantities of materials that provided for a variety of activities. New OEEU rooms had received a well-chosen array of new materials ordered for them. However, some rooms had insufficient or worn out materials. This was especially true in some Chapter 1 rooms that had been added without sufficient funding for the additional room.

As might be expected, since half of the rooms were organized in mid-year, OEEU teachers as a group were the least experienced in teaching kindergarten. One-third of them had taught kindergarten for less than two years. Chapter 1 teachers, 69 percent of whom had taught kindergarten more than three years, were the most experienced group. The level of experience was consistent with the evaluators' ratings of the effectiveness of instructional interactions. The ratings of teacher and student behaviors were, on the average, highest in every item for the group of Chapter 1 rooms, lower in board-funded rooms, and lowest for the OEEU group, with one exception: curiosity and interest were observed to be present in almost as many students in OEEU rooms as in Chapter 1 rooms, but were much less often observed in board-funded

rooms. Ratings of teacher comments about answers or behavior, however, showed OEEU teacher comments to be the most positive.

The highest rating in most cases was for establishing eye contact with the students, an important ingredient in effective teaching. For the item, "Explains or demonstrates rule/procedure," almost all evaluations showed a lower rating than for other items, suggesting that this is an area that needs some improvement, especially since being able to follow rules, an important goal for a kindergarten child, is not likely to be accomplished if inadequately demonstrated. Teachers who failed to give adequate explanations or directions were often observed attempting to remedy the situation, child by child.

Whenever the students were working independently, evaluators often noted that teachers and aides were walking around making sure that all students understood the lesson and correcting any inaccurate understandings or answers. It was really a form of immediate feedback and/or intervention and seemed to be a natural process to follow. Teachers who had large numbers of children had the most difficulty in this area and appeared to be frustrated if they didn't get all misunderstanding corrected or if the class became unruly because of the time necessary to complete the task.

With the exception of some Chapter 1 rooms, government funded rooms had at least a shared teacher-aide, in contrast to board-funded rooms that rarely had aides. Aides were used in a variety of ways, from creating bulletin boards to making dittoes to tutoring individual students to teaching a reading group. They were almost always welcome, especially if the teacher could utilize the aide's strengths and not be bothered by any disabilities that might exist. Often both the teacher and the aide would monitor student work. Although this monitoring was necessary in large rooms, some observers noted that the aide's intervention, understandably, was less adequate than that of the teacher. Nevertheless, most teachers reported needing and appreciating the help of an aide.

Some rooms were observed at lunch time. In most cases, lunch was in the lunchroom under the management of the teacher. However, most CPCs and some other schools had lunch in their rooms. This was used as a relaxed learning experience by many teachers. As one teacher said, "Our meal time is a great learning experience. The children are taught proper manners and given responsibility in the serving process and cleaning up. We also learn proper conversational skills."

Some schools had so many students to serve in the lunchrooms that kindergarten, even half-day kindergarten, was scheduled for lunch as early as 10:20. In these cases, a half hour of prime time was lost, leaving the half-day rooms with only two hours of instructional time. Some schools scheduled both morning and afternoon kindergarten groups to the 11:30-12:00 slot, thus allowing for full instructional time.

TIME USE

Time allocations for different activities in kindergarten varied considerably. Questionnaire responses and comments from several teachers indicated a need for some guidelines to help teachers allocate time appropriately. Having twice the time to teach, as happens with All-Day Kindergarten (ADK), leaves the teacher with time for things such as art and music that have had to be short-changed, and it also reduces the pressure of squeezing the basics into two or two-and-a-half hours. Consequently, the teacher must decide when is the best time to teach what and for how long. Given the mental fatigue that is evident in most children in the afternoon, the teacher soon realizes that most academic teaching must be accomplished in the morning.

In a questionnaire, teachers were asked to record approximate minutes-per-day spent on various activities in their classrooms. Table 2 shows the median amounts of time reported. Following are the rather revealing implications of the allocations as reported. Typically, teachers reported spending 50 minutes per day on reading readiness, oral language and vocabulary development. Most board-funded teachers (HDK) spent less time than this, OEEU teachers (ADK) a little more, and most Chapter 1 teachers (ADK and HDK) reported spending considerably more time in these areas. These data appear to be consistent with the requirement of Chapter 1 that additional time is to be spent on reading readiness in the classrooms because they enroll those most in need. What is noteworthy is that most HDK teachers in Chapter 1 spent more time on reading readiness than did most ADK teachers in OEEU.

Almost all teachers reported reading stories aloud to the class, half of them for more than 15 minutes a day; however, several board-funded (HDK) teachers failed to report this as a part of their day, and only half of those who did read to the class read as much as did the government-funded teachers. Clearly the half-day board-funded teachers spent less time than did all-day or Chapter 1 teachers on language development activities.

Opinions vary as to the appropriateness of teaching children to read in kindergarten. Certainly there is agreement that each child must be ready to learn before being taught to read, but the emphasis on the teaching of reading varies from school to school. Seventy-three percent of the ADK teachers reported teaching reading, with Chapter 2 teachers reporting the most time in this area. Only 30 percent of the half-day teachers said they taught reading. These results were anticipated, since so many ADK participants had preschool and entered kindergarten with a good knowledge of letters and sounds.

Certain other differences in time allocations revealed:

- OEEU (ADK) emphasized social studies more than others.
- Chapter 2 (ADK) and OEEU (ADK) accented science the most.
- The Chapter 1 teachers reported the least time spent on music and art.

TABLE 2
INSTRUCTIONAL TIME DEVOTED TO SKILL AREAS
Reported by Kindergarten Teachers
(N=134)

<u>Skill Area</u>	<u>Median Number of Minutes Per Day</u>	<u>Response Range</u>	<u>% Reporting None or No Response</u>
Oral Language/Vocabulary	20	10-60	13
Reading Readiness	30	20-65	8
Reading Aloud to Class	15	6-40	13
Library Period	10	6-40	25
Basal Reading	20	10-60	41
Mathematics	30	20-60	8
Social Studies	15	6-30	12
Science	15	10-40	10
Interest Centers	15	5-40	25
Large Muscle Coordination	15	8-60	11
Small Muscle Coordination	15	5-40	15
Music	15	5-40	12
Art	15	6-40	14
Nutrition	10	4-35	32
Free Play	15	5-30	27
Recess	10	5-30	46
Meal Time	20	15-45	16
Rest	15	2-45	22

- Almost all Chapter 2 teachers reported scheduling free play for more than 20 minutes, while few others so reported.
- Only seven percent of Chapter 2 (ADK) teachers said they spent more than 20 minutes on rest time, but 53 percent of the OEEQ (ADK) teachers reported doing so.
- Most teachers reported some correlation of subjects around a unit of study, but few Chapter 1 teachers (ADK or HDK) reported this.

In summary, needs of each group can be characterized based on the questionnaire results and, when relevant, the test data.

- Board-funded schools (HDK) probably spent too little time on reading readiness, especially language development, and on reading aloud to the children.
- OEEQ schools (ADK) probably spent too little time on math and related activities and had too much rest time. The provision of more time for free play or interest centers should be considered.

- Chapter 1 schools (ADK and HDK) concentrated on academics to such a degree that other developmental and motivational experiences were neglected.
- Although Chapter 2 schools (ADK) reflected positive changes from previous time allotments based on experience in the all-day format, consideration of correlation of interest centers, social studies, and art activities, including additional time, is recommended.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

Kindergarten teachers were asked: "If all-day kindergarten can be provided for only some children, which group(s) of children do you feel should be served?"

As a group, 55 percent of the respondents indicated ADK should be for the most mature or those with a preschool background, 35 percent felt it should be for the slow learners or low socio-economic children, and the remainder insisted that it be for all students. A further analysis of results showed an interesting difference between kinds of respondents. Three-fourths of the Chapter 1 teachers, those who were quite experienced and taught those most in need, felt ADK should, instead, be for the most mature. Teacher comments suggested that the children should be those who showed signs of being ready to read, those with a longer attention span, the faster children, those who were adjusted and settled. Most of those who felt it should be for the least mature were the relatively inexperienced UEEU teachers who were primarily teaching students who had had preschool. Thus most teachers who had enough experience with kindergarten and with the low achievers to make judgements felt the advantages of ADK were most useful for children who were ready for it. Subsequently, in a survey of Chapter 1 teachers who were asked whether they felt the optimum learning for an immature, low-achieving child would be enrollment in a half-day class of 15 or an all-day class of 30, teachers almost universally selected the HDK option. They equated it to a comparison of quality of time versus quantity of time.

Responses by kindergarten teachers to queries concerning the drawbacks to ADK invariably included the fact that children get tired. Many teachers reported no drawbacks and most felt that the children adjusted to the longer day fairly well, but the majority admitted that the afternoon was not the time for anything academic. If the morning time was not broken up into lunch, gym, or library segments, it could be used to achieve the essential curriculum objectives and enable the expansion of the curriculum in the afternoon. However, when morning teaching time was depleted, it was difficult to cover the necessary objectives effectively, even though the children were there all day, because of the unreceptiveness in the afternoon.

Teachers were asked to estimate the number of children who were really not ready for first grade. Both Chapter 2 (ADK) and UEEU (ADK) teachers appeared to be optimistic in their responses, reflecting a belief that almost all students were ready. This optimism was not shared

by most Chapter 1 or board-funded group teachers, the majority of whom reported having several children who were not ready. Unanswered was the question of the validity of the responses; however, when matching descriptions of students thought to be not ready with their test results, the opinions of some teachers were completely corroborated, but there were several whose ideas of "ready" appeared to reflect minimal expectancies. Thus a need for further clarification of what readiness for grade one really should include becomes apparent.

FIRST GRADE TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

In mid-January, 1985, first grade teachers in schools that had ADK last year were asked to complete a questionnaire about their students. They were asked to check, from a prepared list of 51 separate skills that were grouped into eight developmental areas, the skills in which their students were very well prepared. If they had students from both half-day and full-day programs, they were to answer separately for the programs. Compiled responses reflect impressions about children from 60 half-day kindergartens and 100 all-day kindergartens. The half-day programs were the regular board-funded kindergartens (comparison group) that served students who were not in the all-day government-funded programs in those schools. The reader should be aware that none of the HDK children in this section were in the smaller-sized classes of Chapter 1.

Certain skills were cited by more than 75 percent of respondents as being well-developed, regardless of the kindergarten program. These were:

- volunteering answers
- actively listening to stories
- recognizing letters
- counting
- holding a pencil
- knowledge of the family
- dresssing self
- making friends
- getting along with others

All of them are commonly expected goals of kindergarten programs. They represent skills from each of the different areas. Although important, they don't include all skills necessary for success in first grade.

More than half of the teachers reported that students were well prepared, regardless of whether from half-day or all-day kindergartens, in four of the eight developmental areas. They are listening, coordination, maturity, and socialization. The differences between the ratings of the groups are small, and only one area, socialization, indicates that the half-day students were better prepared than the all-day students. Most of the areas involve the individual maturation process itself, and so one would expect to find few differences between the groups, but listening is a skill area that can be taught, so the expectation is for better development in the ADK students because of the increase in

teaching time. Apparently this is an area that needs more emphasis in the curriculum.

Table 3 shows the percentages of teachers reporting, for each program, specific well-developed skills in the academic areas of writing, pre-reading, speaking, and mathematics. A much larger percentage reported good skill development for the ADK program students than for the HDK students. This was particularly true in writing, letter-sound matching, and language development. Nevertheless, only a few areas were cited as being well-developed by more than half the respondents. These were learning to write names, letters, and numbers, as well as matching sounds with letters. Vocabulary development appears to have been successfully implemented by about half the ADK teachers, but this remains a real need for most kindergarten students. The other academic areas in Table 3 were not as well developed, but their inclusion in the list does not equate with inclusion in the kindergarten curriculum; it may be that some of them are inappropriate for emphasis in kindergarten. Further studies are needed to evaluate these results.

TABLE 3
PERCENT OF FIRST GRADE TEACHERS PERCEIVING GOOD PREPARATION
IN ACADEMIC SKILLS BY STUDENTS' BACKGROUND

	Teacher Responses	
	HDK Preparation (board- funded)	ADK Preparation (Gov't- funded)
Ability to write name	65	82
Ability to write alphabet	57	79
Ability to write numbers	37	74
Matching sounds with letters	42	68
Understanding many vocabulary words	22	53
Making inferences	13	30
Ability to generalize and summarize	10	28
Speaking in sentences	25	44
Pronouncing correctly	23	41
Using good grammar	17	33
Adding	25	38
Subtracting	17	30
Ability to solve problems	7	18

Self-discipline may be one of the main concomitants of ADK, for there were large differences in percentages of teachers reporting preparation in most of the self-discipline skills, with many more citing development in the former all-day, not the half-day, students. The differences can be seen in Table 4 on the next page.

TABLE 4

PERCENT OF FIRST GRADE TEACHERS PERCEIVING GOOD PREPARATION
IN SELF-DISCIPLINE SKILLS BY STUDENTS' BACKGROUND

	<u>Teacher Responses</u>	
	<u>HDK Preparation (board- funded)</u>	<u>ADK Preparation (Gov't- funded)</u>
Concentrating	28	49
Accepting responsibility	42	58
willing to work hard	47	71
Finishing work	38	54
Exhibiting good behavior	62	62

It is noteworthy that half of the teachers reporting on ADK students said they exhibited the ability to concentrate, to accept responsibility, to finish work, and that they were willing to work hard. The differences between the groups are particularly noteworthy in light of the similarity of citings of good behavior, the existence of which often affects teacher ratings of the child's skills. Hope for the transfer of work patterns from kindergarten to the following grades has always been maintained; these results appeared to attest to its existence.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parent participation varied greatly from program to program, with Chapter 2 involving almost all parents, especially in the Child-Parent Centers.

As can be seen in Table 5, parent participation was a priority in Chapter 2 and it resulted in a much greater level of parent involvement in the classroom. Only one of the 22 teachers in Chapter 2 reported having no parent participation, whereas about a third of the teacher respondents from each of the other programs reported none. The data for the in-depth Chapter 2 report suggest some correlation between parent participation and student achievement, especially between classroom involvement and vocabulary development. Although OEE0 guidelines for the Effective Schools Project required parent involvement in the school, evidence does not support this involvement in the kindergarten program. This is a concern, especially since the preschool programs that were the foundation for the kindergarten selection for the OEE0 kindergarten did involve parents.

TABLE 5
PARENT PARTICIPATION IN KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Percent of Schools with:	Chapt. 1	Chapt. 2	UEEU	Board
Parent duty-roster	33%	64%	16%	28%
Participation of 3 or more parents at least twice a month	44%	62%	34%	36%
Non-participation of parents in the classroom	37%	5%	36%	27%

Responses to a questionnaire for parents of kindergarten students in the study revealed a decided preference for the ADK format. Fully 90 percent, or over 700 respondents, said they liked the all-day format better than half-day. Many went on to comment: "Full day sessions allow students to retain and gain more skills. Student interest in learning increases." "Children learn to adjust to being in school all day and are more prepared for first grade." Only a very few parents (five percent) mentioned the tiredness noted by many teachers as a detriment. And none of them stated the obvious advantage for them of being relieved of the responsibility of caring for the child for the other half day.

In general, parent comments showed that most of them think that the more time spent in school in the early years, the more head start there will be for learning. Also it was evident that they had little awareness of the language deficiencies that hamper the progress of many of the children in these schools.

When asked about the changes that occurred in the child during the year, more parents (80 percent) reported a change in the child's ability to work and play with other children than in any other area. This, of course, is maturationally normal at age five and may not be an important reflection of the kindergarten experience. However, 76 percent reported that their child learned a great deal in kindergarten. Independence and self-confidence were also developed during the year as reported by most parents. In spite of the accent in many classrooms and homes on concentrating and finishing work, the area of least reported change was in concentration, in which 64 percent were reported as having improved.

Parents were asked to rank the kindergarten learning experiences in order of importance. Interestingly, "learning to follow directions" was the first choice, followed by "wanting to learn, becoming curious and interested" and then "learning about words and numbers and how to talk with others." Obviously, parents saw the need for motivation in learning, but their additional comments often reflected instead the belief that school is work and that the child should learn to persevere. Some

teachers reported an antipathy to learning games on the part of the children which stemmed from the parental message, "School is for work, not for play."

Communication from school to home was reported as good or excellent by over 90 percent of the parents. However, six percent admitted that they had never talked to the teacher and 17 percent had not been to the school. About half said they had volunteered in the child's classroom at least once. When asked to check what they'd done for their child's school program, most respondents reported doing things at home. Of those who'd helped at school, the majority reported going on field trips or helping with parties, followed by tutoring.

Parents reported what they'd done with their children at home. Table 6 shows the percentage of parents who responded affirmatively for each item. It is encouraging to note that most parents were involved with their children and their learning, at least to some degree. The extent of the involvement and the kind of interaction are unknown and certainly vary greatly. Those activities that demanded instigation by the parent, often involving pre-planning and some creative thinking and energy, were least often reported. It may be that parents, alert to the obvious pre-school learnings such as counting or alphabet recognition, and receiving the assigned homework in these areas, simply don't think of taking the child on outings, playing games or cooking with the child, or getting the child a library card.

TABLE 6
WAYS PARENTS HELPED THEIR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN AT HOME
(N=718)

<u>Percent Reporting</u>	<u>Task</u>
94	talked with child
94	checked homework
91	help child learn alphabet
91	read to child
88	counted with child
88	helped with handwriting
80	watched TV with child
78	provided art supplies for child
69	praised child
66	went on outing with child
49	made games
47	cooked with child
25	got child library card

Since the motivation to help provide the child with the necessary learning for school success is present as evidenced by the high

percentages reporting doing school-oriented tasks such as checking homework and helping with handwriting, perhaps there would be an increase in participation in the other areas if teachers would alert parents to the desirability of playing games, going on outings, getting a library card, and such. Reminders of ways to help children succeed in school should be regularly disseminated, especially since most of these children lacked the background experiences necessary for good school achievement. This lack of experience stemmed from an inadequate home background due, in many cases, to a lack of knowledge as to what is needed. This condition exists despite a strong parent desire to provide a good environment. There must be some education of and reliance on the parents to provide the ongoing kind of supportive environment that is necessary for good educational progress.

ACHIEVEMENT TEST RESULTS

All kindergarten participants in the study were tested in May 1984 using the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) form 7, level 5. Although there is no one score on the ITBS that appears to be a single indicator of readiness for first grade, there is a composite score provided by the publisher. This is a compilation of all subtests, and it can be strongly influenced by scores at the extremes, of which there were many in the Word Analysis, Listening, and Language subtests in the Chicago results; thus, the composite score does not appear in most tables and is used sparingly for analysis or ranking. Nevertheless, crude measure that it is, the composite score does enable an analysis of the relative success of each large group in terms of percentage of students scoring in the lowest quartile. If about 25 percent score in the lowest quartile, it can be assumed that the group is no worse than the norm group in terms of readiness for grade one--in other words, this would indicate a readiness equal to the national average.

Comparison of Spring Scores

The question posed for this analysis was: since all participants in this study came from poverty-level areas and/or homes, and since research tells us that the majority of them would, upon school entrance, place in the bottom quartile of school readiness when compared with national norms, what intervention can help the most students improve, i.e., score above the bottom quartile? This question is different from an examination of the median scores, although they will be reported and the statistics tend to correspond, for the bottom quartile represents the number of students who have inadequate achievement for their grade level, a condition that intervention programs aim to eliminate or lessen.

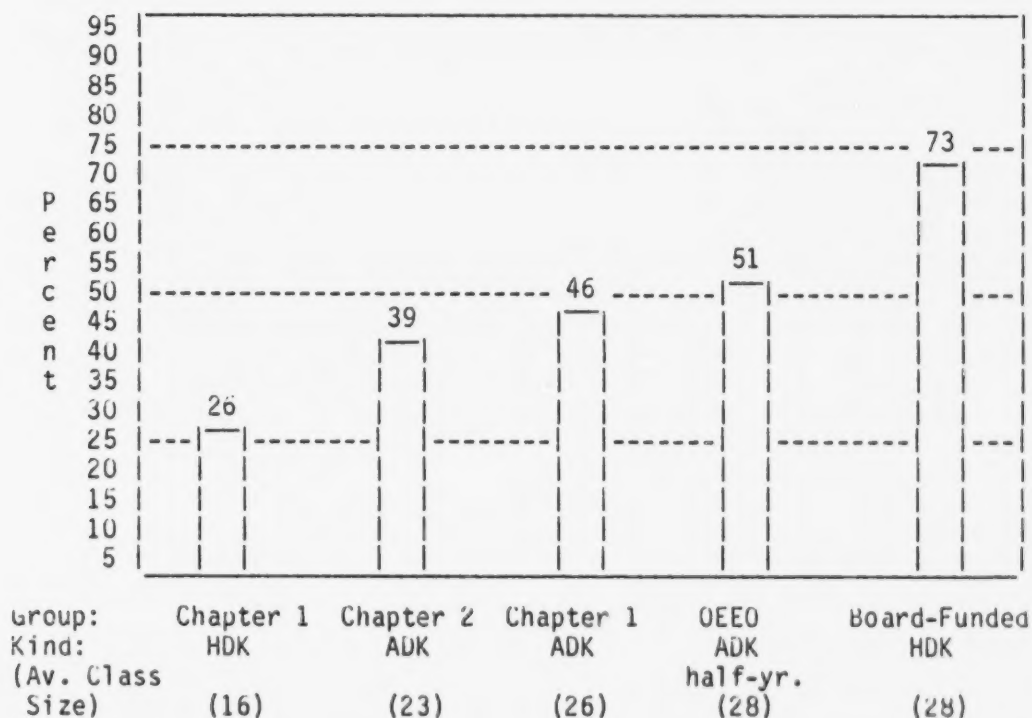
When viewed in this way, it can readily be seen from an examination of Figure 1 that only the half-day, small class sized Chapter 1 program achieved the goal of having an average distribution, i.e., about 25 percent in the lowest quartile.

In view of the fact that the Chapter 1 groups enrolled only those most in need, while the other groups had no such restrictions and, in

FIGURE 1

KINDERGARTEN ITBS COMPOSITE SCORES, SPRING 1984

Percent Scoring in the First Quartile



Explanation: HDK= Half-Day Kindergarten, ADK= All-Day Kindergarten

fact, primarily enrolled those who had preschool experience, it is most surprising that the Chapter 1 HDK program could so successfully meet these children's needs. Clearly student selection cannot account for the differences between groups.

Class Size

What also becomes apparent from an examination of Figure 1 is the hierarchy of the class size when coupled with the proportion of low scores. The larger the class size, the more students scoring in the bottom quartile! This held regardless of the length of the teaching day, since the Chapter 1 HDK had the fewest low achievers. Nevertheless, when the class size was identical, extending the day apparently made a positive difference. Thus Figure 1 suggests that class size, or pupil/teacher ratio, is a major influence on the successful teaching of the very-needy child of kindergarten age, followed by length of instructional day. Following is the opinion of this researcher as to

why class size may be a greater influence on kindergarten than on other grades.

Observations revealed a difference in behavior of kindergarten and preschool teachers from teachers of other grades. Most kindergarten teachers endeavored to interact, monitor, correct, and reteach individuals constantly, whether during recitations, seatwork, free play, or presentations. They seemed to be innately aware of the need for one-to-one interaction and for sequential learning based on successfully completing each step. The test results suggest that those teachers with smaller groups were more able to be successful in their intervention with each child, including the low achievers. A manageable number of students, which enables an immediacy of intervention, appears to be a critical element in successfully meeting needs of low achievers in kindergarten.

Some evidence to back up this opinion exists in connection with teacher aides. An examination of individual school median scores suggests that the presence of an aide in the large ADK Chapter 1 rooms (average class size of 28) made a positive difference in achievement. However, in the case of the small HDK Chapter 1 rooms (average class size of 16), no noticeable difference appears in the scores of rooms with and without an aide. In other words, two adults in a large class make possible more one-to-one interaction with students than if only one adult were present and bring these large classes more in line with the smaller classes in terms of immediacy of intervention. To be sure, this indication of an effect of aides in connection with class size suggests the need for a more definitive study of the efficacy and use of teacher aides.

Subtest Scores

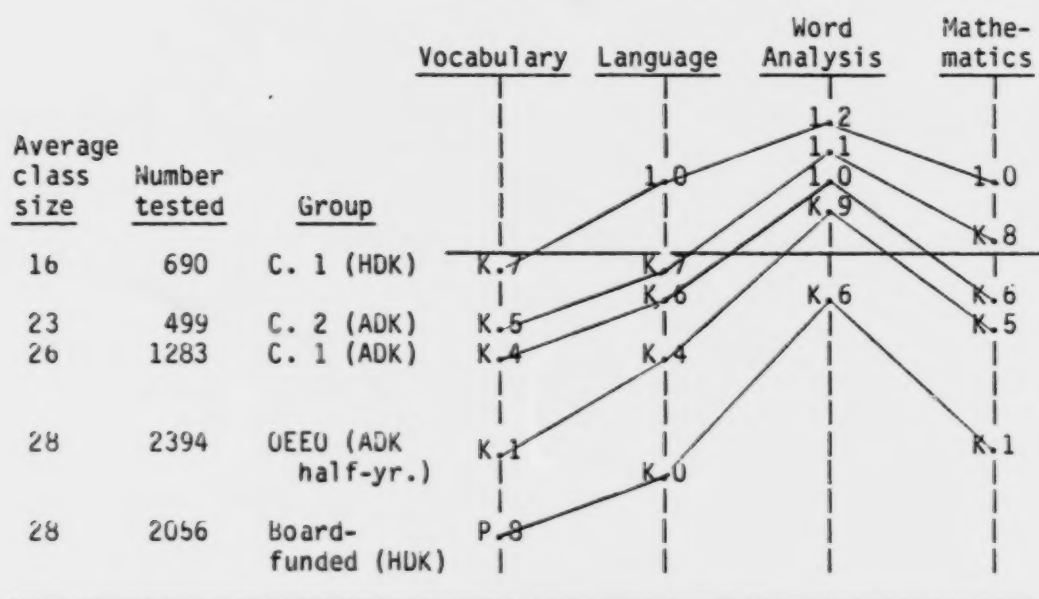
An examination of test results based on the median grade-equivalent (GE) score in each subtest gives an indication of the achieved readiness level of each kindergarten group for first grade work, including their strengths and weaknesses. The ITBS consists of five subtests, four of which appear in Figure 2. The listening subtest is not being reported since some teachers apparently failed to understand that it was to be read only once, thus invalidating the listening subtest results. Nevertheless, listening remains an extremely critical developmental area for kindergarten. Valid scores indicated that this is an area of weakness that needs to be accented.

Figure 2 shows the median subtest scores for each aggregate group tested in spring 1984. The groups are somewhat comparable, since a quarter to a half of each group had preschool experience, and all were from disadvantaged attendance areas. However, the groups differed by pupil/teacher ratio (group size) and number of impact hours (ADK or HDK).

Once again, as in Figure 1, the highest-achieving group was the half-day group with the small class size, and the lowest was the half-day group with the large class size. The configuration of the

FIGURE 2

KINDERGARTEN ITBS SUBTEST MEDIANS
IN GRADE EQUIVALENTS BY GROUP, SPRING 1984



subtest scores is very similar from group to group and the hierarchy is exactly the same as in Figure 1. Vocabulary development is obviously the greatest need, and Word Analysis scores reflect the accent that has recently been placed on this teaching area. The relative level of success between all-day groups appears to be influenced by class size as well as the experience of the teachers in teaching ADK, as in Chapter 2.

The scores for the board-funded group are quite disturbing, particularly since the half-day Chapter 1 students, those who had been the least ready for kindergarten in the fall, scored above grade level in all but vocabulary. Essentially, the board-funded group's low median scores, one of which is a whole year below grade level, suggest that only a small minority of students in regular, half-day kindergartens in disadvantaged areas are ready for school success when entering grade one. This appears to imply that a more widespread intervention on the order of the kindergarten programs here evaluated should be considered by the Chicago Public Schools.

Pretest-Posttest Scores

In this report, comparability between groups has been assumed based on descriptive data. However, pretests were administered in November 1983 to all Chapter 2 and all CPC participants to provide a pretest-posttest base for the assumptions in the posttest evaluation of all groups. It was anticipated that the pretests would reveal information

about the long term and short term effects of preschool programs, as well as about the differences between kindergarten students with and without preschool experience.

Table 7 reveals that, understandably, the Chapter 2 Parent schools, the group with no preschool experience, had the lowest pretest scores. However, even higher scores were anticipated from the CPCs because of the preschool experience. Since none of the pretests for any group, with the exception of Word Analysis, were at or above pretest grade level (K.2), that expectation appears to have been unrealistic.

TABLE 7
KINDERGARTEN ITBS PRETEST, POSTTEST, AND GAIN SCORES
Median GE Scores by Subtest

<u>Subtest and Group</u>	<u>Nov. Median</u>	<u>May Median</u>	<u>Median Gain</u>
Vocabulary			
CPC's	P.7	K.7	0.7
Chapter 2 Parent Schools	P.7	K.3	0.5
Language			
CPC's	P.9	K.8	0.8
Chapter 2 Parent Schools	P.7	K.6	0.7
Word Analysis			
CPC's	K.6	1.2	0.7
Chapter 2 Parent Schools	K.2	1.0	0.9
Mathematics			
CPC's	K.1	1.2	0.8
Chapter 2 Parent Schools	P.8	K.7	0.7

Based on matched scores for 203 Parent School students and 557 students in CPC's.

Gain scores, however, were adequate or better for six months' schooling except for the Parent school vocabulary gain of only five months. Posttest scores for the CPCs in particular, were very encouraging. They have closed the gap between their achievement and that of the norm group. Apart from a slight problem with vocabulary, CPC students appear to be quite ready for grade one, having achieved at grade level (K.8) and above. Even the Parent schools have progressed sufficiently to suggest that the all-day program has enabled them to

enter grade one at a fair degree of readiness. One may speculate that one year's intervention (CPC enrollment as a four-year-old) may have provided a base for the next year's growth. If so, then the students in the Chapter 2 Parent schools may be expected to show even greater growth in grade one than in kindergarten.

Tests for kindergarten age students are difficult to administer and can be frustrating for the child. This is especially true at pretest time. Nevertheless, pretests can provide some guidance for curriculum emphasis. An example would be the way HDK teachers from CPCs may have used the pretest scores. On the pretest, students showed great weaknesses in language and vocabulary while exhibiting advanced word analysis skills. Posttests, gain scores, and teacher-reported time schedules suggest that HDK teachers emphasized vocabulary growth and language development and de-emphasized word analysis. Thus, they had the largest gains of any group in vocabulary and language and only an average gain in word analysis. If used correctly and not as a study focus, pretests can serve as a diagnostic tool as well as providing a baseline for future evaluation.

FIRST GRADE PROGRESS

First grade teachers in schools that had ADK the previous year were asked about current (January 30) pupil placement in the basal reading program. Answers to this question, found in Table 8, revealed strengths and weaknesses of both the kindergarten and the first grade pre-reading/reading programs.

TABLE 8

GRADE ONE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

January 30 Reading Level Of Students

(N = 105 teachers)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Chap. 1 Schools</u>	<u>Chap. 2 Schools</u>	<u>OEEC Schools</u>
Below Primer Level	46%	37%	34%	52%
Primer or Above	54%	63%	66%	48%
N	2566	1138	185	1243

Any student who is not in the primer by January will have great difficulty successfully completing first grade work. As many teachers commented, there is much to accomplish in first grade reading and it requires setting an objective which expects completion of the reading program and a pacing of instruction to meet the goal--not an easy or

stress-reducing task. What is most disturbing is that almost half of the first grade students in these rooms (46%) were, by mid-year, already far behind. And this occurred in rooms where teachers wrote comments about the group being "the best ever" or "a gifted group" or "all-day kindergarten really prepared them well." Such a response raises questions as to the pacing of first grade instruction--especially for those students who come much better prepared because of the additional kindergarten instruction.

Also, since 62% of the ADK teachers indicated in 1984 that they had fewer than three students who were not ready for first grade work, it seems strange that so many were behind by mid-year. Of course, kindergarten teacher judgement of readiness to read may be very different from the reality of learning to read. Possibly the teachers who felt they had several students who were not really ready for grade one were most accurate. Several of them commented on the current practice in many schools of automatic promotion from kindergarten to grade one; they wished to retain the immature student who lacked the readiness for first grade so he/she would not experience failure in learning to read, write, and compute.

Regardless of which teacher judgement is correct, it is apparent that no program can guarantee that all children will be ready for first grade work after only one year in kindergarten. Age alone does not signify readiness. It is also apparent that pacing and high expectations on the part of the teacher are necessary for successful completion of the first grade curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

It appears that the saying, often quoted by mothers who work, "It's the quality, not the quantity, of time spent with the children that's important," applies to kindergarten as well. At least it is reflected in this study of kindergarten for children from disadvantaged areas, for students in half-day programs with a 16:1 pupil/teacher ratio achieved much more on an achievement test than did those in all-day programs with a 28:1 ratio or even a 22:1 pupil/teacher ratio.

Quantity of teacher time with the class, however, did make a significant difference when the all-day kindergarten programs with a 28:1 ratio were compared to the regular, board-funded half-day program with a similar ratio, for the students in the all-day program achieved much more. Thus, the needs of the disadvantaged child were best met with a low pupil/teacher ratio in half-day kindergarten, and next best with an all-day kindergarten.

Test results suggest that the regular, board-funded kindergarten program is inadequate to meet the needs of students in disadvantaged areas. First grade teacher progress reports corroborate this. Part of the problem is the large class size of 28 to 30 in each half-day section. In addition, kindergarten teachers rarely receive inservice that specifically addresses their needs. Principals are rarely knowledgeable about kindergarten practices and curriculum and may impede

the program unknowingly. Scheduling of the free meals, a necessity in schools serving disadvantaged children, sometimes involves cutting into class time of kindergarten, leaving the teacher with considerably less than the scheduled two-and-a-half hours of instructional time. Parent involvement, while desirable, becomes almost impossible to accomplish when serving 60 different children each day.

Since children entering school from disadvantaged homes frequently do not have the vocabulary that is used in school, it is not surprising that the test revealed this to be the weakest area. In only a very few rooms was the vocabulary growth great enough to indicate adequacy. But it did happen and is possible.

Regardless of length of day the length and use of instructional time is the critical element in successful kindergarten performance. Those who spent more time teaching mathematics had better math test scores. Those who failed to schedule instructional time wisely had lower test scores.

Word analysis skills, as tested, appeared to be well-developed in most kindergarten children. Also, many had begun to read before finishing kindergarten. If word analysis is the main ingredient of the first grade reading program, most children from government-funded programs should make good progress in grade one; however, almost half of them were already behind by the middle of grade one. One might surmise that the development of word analysis skills does not always result in successful reading, or the first grade teachers don't pace their teaching at a rate which will lead to satisfactory completion of the curriculum.

Inservice of teachers in new all-day programs was not only essential, but also well-planned and well-received. Inservice for regular, board-funded kindergarten teachers rarely met their needs or was relevant to their program. There appears to be little in the way of official guidelines to give kindergarten teachers direction.

Parents of kindergarten children were usually willing to help, if they had time and were asked to do so, both at home and at school. However, they often needed guidance in various ways to help, and this was best accomplished by staff members whose jobs included working with the parents. Parents were very supportive of the all-day kindergarten plan.

Most experienced kindergarten teachers realized that the pupil/teacher ratio was the most critical element in their teaching, whereas inexperienced teachers and parents felt that all-day sessions would best prepare the children for grade one. First grade teachers reported that the all-day pupils were better-prepared than the others, but they failed to capitalize on the readiness in the pacing of their instruction. Many experienced teachers suggested keeping immature children in kindergarten for an additional year, for they recognized the importance of the readiness factor to future school success, as well as the failure syndrome which occurs when children are placed into a situation for which they are not prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Any school or program considering the implementation of an all-day kindergarten for the first time should be provided with a list of things to consider, such as:

- For every 60 students served there must be an additional room provided with appropriate space for 30 kindergarten students.
- Monies for new furniture and kindergarten materials, equipment, and supplies must be available.
- Specific inservice is needed and should be provided by those with experience in and knowledge of ways to best implement an all-day kindergarten, including the scheduling of time.
- If there is a large number of children exhibiting an extremely-low level of readiness, they may profit most from a low pupil/teacher ratio, even if it must be for only a half day.

Because the concept of all-day kindergarten is still in the developmental stage, care must be taken to create guidelines for its implementation. Teachers who have been in all-day kindergarten programs for at least two years and who have successfully prepared their students for grade one as measured by tests, first grade teacher opinions, and observations should develop the guidelines after a thorough grounding in what research has to say. Indications are that teacher aides should be included as a part of any design created to serve as many as 30 students.

Certain needs of all kindergarten programs, whether government or board funded, have become apparent. Since breakfast and lunch have, in several instances, usurped instructional time, this practice should be discontinued. Especially in schools with half-day kindergarten, breakfast should be served before school and lunch should be at noon.

Some separate inservice should be provided for all kindergarten teachers. Included should be a sharing by teachers as well as guidance and instruction in various aspects of kindergarten. Special emphasis should be placed on the development of effective explanations of rules and procedures for teachers of kindergarten students.

Since vocabulary, listening, and language are areas in great need of remediation and development in disadvantaged students, and since some teachers successfully remediate, an intensive study of the practices in the successful rooms should be conducted to determine what makes a difference. A comparison group of those who have been observed to be successful teachers, but whose test results reveal weak growth in these areas, should also be observed.

In cases where parents and teachers feel the child is too immature and is not ready for grade one, the child should spend an additional year in kindergarten or in a pre-first grade. In this way, the child will get a good start and is not likely to experience failure in the

learning process. Concurrently, parents should be educated as to the importance of readiness and self-concept to school success.

Parent involvement should be a priority, with one staff member accepting the responsibility for its development. Meaningful, instructive parent interaction with a child or children in the classroom should be encouraged, for that kind of involvement helps both parent and child.

Teachers of grade one students should be helped to adjust their instruction to the level of students entering with advanced skills from special programs. Goals and expectations should be expanded, and teaching methods should be re-evaluated.

Certain language and thinking skills were rarely well-developed in entering first grade students. They are:

- pronouncing correctly
- speaking in sentences
- using good grammar
- understanding what is read
- making inferences
- ability to generalize and summarize

All of these skills are developmental and should begin during the preschool years. They are also important throughout the educational process. Although they can't be contained easily in specific curriculum objectives, their development should permeate each teacher's instruction whether preschool, kindergarten, or grades one through twelve. An awareness of the need to include these as goals of their teaching should be transmitted to all teachers.